Executive Proclamation

State of South Dakota
Office of the Governor

Whereas, Gene Abdallah has dedicated nearly his entire adult life to serving the public. For nearly 50 years, he served the public in multiple branches of government and nearly all branches of law enforcement, from federal to state to the local level; and,

Whereas, Raised from humble roots, Gene was born on July 16, 1936. Incredibly, Gene's father, George Abdallah, immigrated to the United States as an only child in 1894 from Syria at the tender age of 15. With no money in his pocket and no knowledge of the English language, Gene's father found work – mostly as a laborer – in order to support himself. With this background, Gene was taught the importance of hard work and perseverance at a very early age; and,

Whereas, Gene developed close friendships and connections with countless South Dakotans throughout the state which would pay dividends for Gene's charitable works in the years to come. As U.S. Marshal, Gene decided to utilize his statewide connections and organize an event where all levels of law enforcement from across the state could come together on an annual basis to share stories and foster friendships. This event, which had 53 attendees in the first year, has now grown to over 1500 attendees annually; and,

Whereas, As the Law Enforcement Appreciation Dinner grew in popularity, Gene combined his dedication to law enforcement with his lifelong devotion to needy children. He called upon countless businesses throughout the state to support the law enforcement event with donations to children's charities. As a result of Gene's innovation, tens of thousands of dollars are donated each year to local children's charities in the name of law enforcement. Incredibly, through his Law Enforcement Appreciation Dinner, Gene has now raised millions of dollars for needy children throughout South Dakota; and,

Whereas, Gene helped found the well-known Christmas charity "Sioux Falls Cares". Through his efforts, tens of thousands of dollars in food, clothing, and toys are distributed each year at Christmas time to needy families in the Sioux Falls area:

Now, Therefore, I, Dennis Daugaard, Governor of the state of South Dakota, do hereby proclaim November 16, 2011 as

GENE ABDALLAH DAY

in South Dakota, and thank Gene for his dedication, selfless service, and leadership in South Dakota.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the state of South Dakota, in Pierre, the Capital City, this Twentieth Day of October in the Year of Our Lord, Two Thousand and Eleven.

Dennis Daugaard

Dennis Daugaard, Governor

Attest:

Jason Gant

Jason M. Gant, Secretary of State